indicative of a taste for ornament and decoration, which, in the richer quarters of the town, are lavished with a profuse hand on the exterior of the houses inhabited by the middling classes.

We have works enough giving us exact and beautiful drawings and descriptions of the many public buildings with which the capital abounds; we should like to see one devoted entirely to describing the elevation and ornament of private hotels and houses. These are so numerous and so diversified, that it would be as useful to the builder and architect, as interesting to the amateur. As many as seven thousand new houses are said to have been erected in the capital in one year. The number is very considerable, when we bear in mind, that the majority of the houses are inhabited each by several families. Of these the most richly ornamented are to be found in the centre of the town, often in the midst of dark and narrow streets, standing back from the old ranges of building on the lines laid down in the regulations for the general improvements of the public thoroughfares.

The amount of work thus doing yearly for the material comfort of the population is, as it will be seen, very considerable, and if taken in the mass, of a much more gigantic character than the creations of vanity and pride, and although the materials used may not be, taking them separately, so wonderfully long, and broad, and heavy, as those which toiling slaves by thousands dragged up to their resting-places at the bidding of their royal or priestly masters, some of those daily placing side by side, and piling end on end, are by no means to be despised, and would be worthy corner-stones of greater undertakings than mere private edifices.

The value of the property thus erected is very considerable; and, divided among many proprietors, infinitely more beneficial to the working classes, inasmuch as employment is more regular and certain, and wages have a greater chance of keeping up at a fair rate—a matter of great importance to continued national prosperity. At the same time the labourer can afford to pay better rent, and the builder, confident in the solvency of his tenants, *can afford* to risk more money in constructions better suited for human habitation. All these little matters form, as it were, a wheel within a wheel of prosperity, just as much and as surely as the unprofitable laying out of money, or its too great monopolizing in few hands, becomes a leading source of uneasiness and unhealthiness in the every-day relations between the different classes and interests.

The progress of works of public utility under the direction of the authorities is also very considerable, although for various reasons, not always so active as with us. Where the Government directly interests itself there, every thing goes on rapidly enough, and no money or efforts are spared to accomplish most fully and perfectly objects in view. Public buildings therefore are well and spiritedly carried out. But when the interests of parties and companies are brought in to bear upon enterprise, the jealousy and contentions arising out of them have the effect of retarding public works, and causing considerable loss to the nation. Hence, the progress of works connected with railroads has been slow, although their benefit has been recognized by men of all classes and opinions. Rival interests in existing undertakings, such as canals, public conveyances, &c., and their rivalry between the companies themselves, are among the causes of delay.

A building of considerable extent, and likely to be of much architectural beauty, is now gradually rising by the side of the hotel of the President of the Chamber of Deputies. It is to be the future residence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and has attached to it some of the most extensive and best arranged offices that any administration can boast of. The hotel, at present occupied by that department of Government, has been found so inconvenient, that for many years a suitable building has been sought for, or a site, whereon to build one fitted for the purpose, and worthy of that important branch of the public service. The splendid palace on the Quai d'Orsay, built partly of the materials collected by the Emperor Napoleon for the palace of the King of Rome, was found to be too ill-arranged and too extensive for the minister "des Affaires Etrangères," — the minister of "strange" affairs, as a Frenchman, proud to speak a little English, once remarked. It is now devoted to the Cour des Comptes, which had been equally long on the look out for a "locale," and had to be re-arranged and cut up to such an extent, that the majority of its once splendid rooms form now only so many little wooden offices for the employés of the establishment, while the immense mass of archives, documents, and valuable papers belonging to the court, through which pass all the accounts of the kingdom, are piled up in a mass under the extensive roofs of the palace.

On the death of the unfortunate Duke de Bourbon, the palace of the Chamber of Deputies, and the extensive property and buildings attached to it, became the inheritance of the Duke d'Aumale, and were finally bought for the state at, it is said, the pretty little sum of 100 millions of francs! At the same time, immense sums were voted for the construction of a hotel for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and for the enlargement of the palace of the President, the original residence of the Condés. The works of both hotels have been pushed with the utmost activity, so that the President may occupy the one in the course of next year, and the minister the other in the year following. Already the masonry of the foundations and of the basement story are executed, the walls of the hotel of the Minister of Foreign Affairs being already 25 feet above the ground, and presenting an extent of front of some 300 yards. The palace (for such it is in reality) will present a rich colonnade towards the Seine; and some opinion may already be formed of the imposing character of the edifice and the grandeur of the style, although only now arrived at the height of half way up the first story. The offices extend along the Rue de Téns and the Esplanade of the Invalides; they are at this moment as high as the third story above the ground-floor. Their length towards the street is some hundred and twenty yards. It may be said to have two fronts, one towards the street, and another towards the court and garden of the palace, with two grand entrances, or *portes-cochères*, from the street. There are six-and-twenty windows in a line, opening upon the front, and twenty-four upon the court. Turning the corner into the Rue de l'Université, we come to that portion of the building intended for the archives, or records of the administration. It is a simple yet massive-looking erection, without any windows apparently towards the street: the works are very far advanced. Massive walls between the garden and the court of the offices, to the extent of sixty yards, are completed; and also a portion of the wall of separation between the offices of the Chamber of Deputies and the new hotel. Already two considerable divisions of the Esplanade of the Invalides have been occupied by the workmen; and it is now said that the Minister of War is about to grant permission for the use of another, upon which they may deposit the materials necessary for the works, and erect workshops. In short, nothing is spared to facilitate the progress of the constructions.

The Hôtel of the President is terminated, in so far as the heavy work is concerned: plasterers, carpenters, and decorators have now to do their part, and complete it for habitation. The original hotel had but one story; another has been added to it, and a roof, covered with zinc, containing rooms for domestics. It presents a range of thirteen windows towards the river. A beautiful gallery has been constructed between the hotel and the Chamber of Deputies, to form a passage for the president. The edifice has now a much more imposing aspect than it had formerly, without any great pretensions to architectural beauty, or to boldness or originality of design. A balustrade runs round the top, concealing a portion of the roof, while vases and groups of small allegorical figures ornament the angles, and add not a little to the elegance of the façade. When all these constructions are terminated, the sum of money spent by the country within these fifty years upon this palace and its dependencies, will scarcely amount to less than two millions sterling.

It appears that a depôt is constructing for the archives of the Cour des Comptes, to which we have already alluded, within a short distance of that building, but it will not be finished before the end of 1848, or beginning of 1849. A stamp and registering office are also preparing, and are expected to be ready about the same period.

The Sainte Chapelle is progressing rapidly, and is expected to be entirely completed in 1849. A public exhibition of stained glass windows, intended for it, is now open at the Palais des Beaux Arts. Some of them are of a very elegant character, and of beautiful effect.

It is useless to give a description at the present moment of all the works in progress on public buildings; they are too numerous—we will merely mention a few more:—The Palace of the Institute is expected to be finished in 1849; the works at the Chamber of Peers scarcely before 1850; at the Ecole des Mines in 1852; at the Ecole Royale des Beaux Arts, the amphitheatre of anatomy is constructed; the Ecole Normale nearly finished; the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève is advancing; the masonry will be completed about 1850. The enlargement and restoration of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers will be completed in 1850; the works at the Royal Observatory, in the course of this year; those of the Archives of the kingdom in 1849; those of the Ecole des Ponts-et-Chaussées in the course of this year, &c. &c.

One of the great arches of the Salle des Pas-Perdus has been lately propped up, owing to its shewing signs of giving way, a rent of a considerable extent having manifested itself, as already mentioned in THE BUILDER; workmen are also perched up on the historical tower of the Palais of the Conciergerie, overlooking the river, for the purpose of repairing and restoring it.

THE PAST FORMS OF ARCHITECTURE.*

It may be considered as a kind of traditional opinion to derive the origin of architecture from the construction of the first hut. As to the mechanical parts of architecture this may be right, but surely not, if we consider it as an elegant art. The efforts directed to the satisfaction of a merely external want may gradually produce comfort, nay luxury, but not a fine art. Art is the child of enthusiasm, and when once sprung to light, she produces enthusiasm in every feeling heart.

Therefore the architecture of every people becomes not art till it is devoted to religion. But when it takes a certain character, totally agreeing with the spirit of the religion it serves, it displays itself,—rises to the highest pitch with the display and rise of the worship to which it is devoted,—and falls with it, when, giving room to a purer religion, this worship sinks down into dust.

In this way the resemblance of the different architectures of the pagans, which is yet so embarassing to the inquirer, will be clear of itself. It was in the main the same idea which these different nations strove to realize in their architecture; therefore it resulted that the principal forms of their buildings were the same.

How various soever be the particular systems of religious ideas among the different pagan nations, they all agree in these two points; that their notions of the Supreme Being and future life are only earthly, and in no respect passing the limits of sensual conceptions.

The correlate of the idea of the Supreme Being is in architecture the temple, and that of future life the sepulchre.

Therefore not the habitations of the living but the habitations of the gods and the habitations of the dead bear the first marks of a dawning taste in architecture. Not before this taste has grown to a certain height, is it imparted to the habitations of the kings, the gods of earth, and then, according as nations advance in civilization, it is imparted to all other buildings which are not merely instrumental to the satisfaction of vulgar necessities.

In this manner, if we trace the first marks of a taste in architecture, we find among all heathen nations at first the form of the pyramid, as well for the temple as for the sepulchre. Its form is to be found as well in the buildings of this name in Egypt, which fill the whole world with the report of their greatness, as in the huge barrows or cairns of the north of Europe, in the terraced edifices of the Babylonians and Persians and the pagods of the

* From "System einer vergleichenden Baukunst." By Herr. Architekten. Potsdam, 1847.

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